

ASSAf STATEMENT ON XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) condemns the xenophobic attacks that took place in various parts of South Africa in the month of May 2008. These degrading attacks were a gross violation of human rights.

Since the Second World War, there has been a developing consensus internationally that the goals of human liberty, freedom and protection of human rights need to be strongly fostered. In the past fifteen years, South African scholars have been at the forefront of research and publishing in this field. The xenophobic attacks on African foreign nationals, especially refugees in South Africa emphasize the necessity to redouble the effort to understand and to develop an ability to deal with these social evils.

Foreign nationals make important contributions to both the formal and informal sectors of the South African economy. South Africa is a signatory to the 1951 Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Those who enter the country seeking refuge from political persecution, human rights violations and extreme poverty, have rights which should be safeguarded. Actions that contravene national and international laws on immigration are unreservedly condemned.

ASSAf is involved in joint partnerships with other African Academies and will continue to work tirelessly to build stronger ties with our counterparts in other parts of Africa, while promoting platforms where the different sectors of society can contribute to the dialogue on ideas of an inclusive social compact that will avoid such unfortunate incidents in the future.

The Academy wishes to salute all those who have provided humanitarian assistance to the victims of the attacks and calls on all local communities in South Africa to respect fellow human beings, irrespective of the country from which they may originate.

Issued by: Prof Robin Crewe, President
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